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SUBJECT: DRC ELECTIONS: PPRD HOLDS SLIM PLURALITY IN
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY VOTING

REF: KINSHASA 1231

¶1. (U) With approximately half of the DRC's electoral districts reporting, initial election results for the National Assembly show the Kabila-affiliated People's Party for Reconstruction and Development (PPRD) currently leading all other political parties. No results, however, have yet been posted for Kinshasa, which will represent some ten percent of the total National Assembly seats, and will presumably favor other parties. As of August 29, the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) has finished counting the votes for 86 of the 169 electoral districts, representing 192 seats in the 500-member National Assembly. According to the preliminary results, the PPRD has won 51 seats (26 percent) thus far, 33 independent candidates have won National Assembly seats (nearly 17 percent of the total allocated), and Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba's Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC) party has garnered 21 seats, making the MLC the third-largest group with 11 percent of total votes cast. A total of 36 parties (not including independent candidates) have won seats thus far, none of which can currently claim a majority in the Assembly. The future prime minister (who will serve as the head of government) is, according to the DRC's constitution, named from the majority party/coalition in the National Assembly by the newly-elected president.

PARLIAMENTARY RESULTS TRICKLING IN

¶2. (U) The PPRD and the MLC are the primary parties in two larger political alliances, both formed with the intention of gaining a majority of seats in the National Assembly. Other parties allied with the presidential campaign under the umbrella Alliance for the Presidential Majority (AMP) have won thus far another 16 seats, providing a total of 67 seats, or 35 percent of the total awarded thus far -- assuming the AMP alliance holds in the new National Assembly. The MLC leads the Rally of Congolese Nationalists (RENACO), which has won 24 seats (12 percent total) of the 192 for which results are known. (Again, this total includes the 33 MLC seats.) The RENACO alliance thus far has a smaller percentage of seats in the future National Assembly than all independents put together. Independent candidates, however, are only loosely affiliated and will likely not represent a uniform voting bloc in the future National Assembly.

¶3. (U) The PPRD-AMP group has won seats in all of the 10 provinces reporting results. The alliance, as expected, is strongest in the eastern provinces, having won 12 of 19 seats thus far in South Kivu (which has 32 total), five of eight

seats in Maniema (12 total), and 19 of 34 seats in Katanga (69 total). The MLC-RENACO alliance is stronger in western provinces, but not overwhelmingly so. At present, the group has won six of 16 seats in Equateur (which has 58 total) and four of eight seats in Western Kasai (40 total). Independent candidates have proved particularly popular in Katanga, winning ten of the 34 seats awarded there thus far, and in Eastern Kasai, taking six of the 19 seats (of a total of 39) in that province.

¶4. (U) Through August 29, a total of 6,792,923 valid ballots had been counted from the 86 districts reporting. Nearly two-thirds of the seats decided thus far (118 of 192) come from the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu, Maniema, Orientale, and Katanga. The CEI is expected to announce provisional national legislative results by September 4. Based on these figures, the next National Assembly is scheduled to be installed September 19.

¶5. (U) Several well-known political figures, including government ministers and high-ranking political party officials, were elected in their respective districts. Minister of Budget Francois Mwamba, secretary general of the MLC, was elected to a seat in Eastern Kasai province, and PPRD Secretary General Vital Kamerhe was elected in South Kivu. Former Minister of Budget Alexis Thambwe also won his district in Maniema. Thambwe left the MLC earlier this year to run as an independent candidate, and allied himself with the AMP. Two other prominent PPRD officials won seats in their races as well: Kikaya bin Karubi, Kabila's personal secretary, was elected in Maniema, while Katangan Vice

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Governor Chikez Diemu won a seat in his province. In addition, two candidates who ran in the presidential race won

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seats in their home provinces. Roger Lumbala, president of RCDN, won a seat in Eastern Kasai, and Pierre Pay Pay of CODECO won a seat representing the city of Butembo in North Kivu province. (Note: The DRC's electoral law does not prohibit candidates from running simultaneously for different offices. The only prohibition is that candidates cannot run in multiple electoral districts at the same level -- i.e., legislative or provincial elections. End note.)

JUDGING PRESIDENTIAL RESULTS

¶6. (U) On August 29, the Supreme Court began deliberations on challenges levied against the provisional presidential results announced by the CEI August 20. According to CEI officials, a total of eight cases were brought before the Court, including one by Vice President Azarias Ruberwa's Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD). As reported reftel, Ruberwa has claimed the July 30 elections were "marred by massive irregularities." The Court has seven days to review and issue rulings on the challenges. The Court is expected to announce its decisions by September 5, allowing the CEI to declare final first-round presidential results by September

¶6. (Note: The original CEI calendar projected final provisional results by August 31. Because of the violence in Kinshasa August 20-22, however, the CEI and the Court decided to extend the period for bringing forward electoral challenges, thereby pushing back the date for a final announcement. End note.)

PREPS FOR THE NEXT ROUND

¶7. (U) The CEI, meanwhile, has begun preparing material for the next round of elections on October 29, which will include the presidential run-off election as well as balloting for provincial assemblies. CEI officials said August 29 that the

designs for provincial assembly ballots have been sent to printers in South Africa, and will start to be delivered throughout the DRC by the end of September. The ballot for the second-round presidential election has been designed as well. The CEI is waiting until a final ruling from the Supreme Court concerning first-round results before sending that mock-up to the printers.

COMMENT: POWER OF THE INDEPENDENTS

18. (SBU) The strong showing thus far of independent candidates highlights the importance and power this group could yield in the future National Assembly. As no party or coalition to this point has an absolute majority of seats, both the AMP and RENACO will be strongly courting independents -- an effort that effectively has already begun -- to control the legislature. Certain nominal leaders of the group of independents -- such as Alexis Thambwe and Martin Fayulu -- allied themselves in the campaign with Kabila's AMP and are attempting to persuade others to join the coalition. As noted, though, the independents do not speak with one voice, and future allegiances will be determined more often on personalities than on politics. The high percentage of independent candidates elected also shows the comparative weakness of the existing political parties, indicating that political choices -- at least on a more local level -- are being made based on the individual and not the party. Whatever the causes, governing by consensus in the next National Assembly is likely to be a complicated affair of juggling the interests of a myriad of factions. End comment.
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